

The Generosity Roller Coaster

www.LovingOurCommunity.org - 40 Day Generosity Campaign in Guatemala leads to exciting and miraculous results

By Pastor Rony Madrid, Vida Real Church in Guatemala.



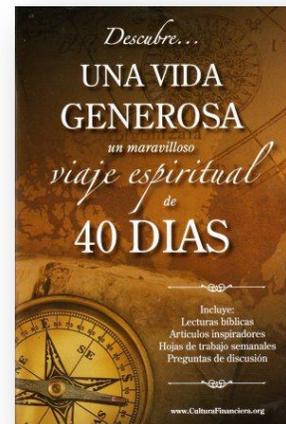
If you want to have real fun, you must ride the Generosity roller coaster.



I live in Guatemala, a country with many challenges. But maybe the biggest challenge is to be able to see what the LORD sees and do what the LORD wants. There is so much poverty here, that those who were born here, we have learned to accept it as part of the landscape, it seems like is a normal thing to us. I am pastor of a church called "Real Life," and through verses in Isaiah 58 the LORD began to awaken my heart to help the needy. In this passage God says to his people: I'm not impressed with your religion if you do not dedicate yourself to help the poor.

Isaiah 58:6-7 say, "This is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help."

As a result of understanding the will of God, we decided to start a movement called Iniativa58.org and also to do a nationwide campaign called "40 Days of generosity." We wanted to teach churches and Christians across Guatemala the blessing of giving and to show God's love for needy people in our country. Brian Kluth, founder of www.LovingOurCommunity.org gave us permission to use his 40 Day www.GenerousLife.org devotional across Guatemala. We had a Vision event and challenged pastors to give out the 40 Day devotional, to preach on generosity, and to invite families to read the 40 Day devotional together every day. At the end of the 40 Days, we asked each church raise the greatest offering that the they had ever collected. But to do this with pure motives, the offerings churches received were to go to help the needy. Over 100 churches, denominations, ministries, businesses, and groups decided to join the "40 Days of Generosity" for our country.



Also my friend, Jaime Farrach, a well known business man in my city was able to arrange for FREE advertising space on TV, radio, and newspapers. These 40 Day ads were to challenge all Guatemalans to be more generous. What a joy to see how the LORD opened this media door for us and \$4,000,000US was donated for FREE!

The LORD was also working behind the scenes. One month before the campaign started, my friend Dave Polstra from Perimeter Church in Atlanta came from Atlanta to Guatemala. He told me that his church had a matching fund of \$20,000US to help build houses for people in need. This proposal came precisely at the time when we were deciding how my church's 40 Day offering could be used to help the needy. We felt that God was calling us to allocate our offering to build houses.

In Guatemala there is an organization called "Un techo para mi país" (A Roof for My Country) that uses volunteers to build small houses for \$1500US. We decided to challenge our church families to give their offerings to help build houses for a needy family.

At the beginning I thought we could raise the \$20,000US, so we can meet the \$20,000US matching fund and build 25+ houses. During the campaign my faith grew and I thought we could raise enough money to build 40 to 60 houses. Finally the day of the offering we were surprised by the Lord. We saw many families make enormous efforts to generous support this project.



Here's just a few examples of the outpouring of generosity we experienced. A young girl asked her dad to donate all of her Quinceañera Celebration monies (a long awaited and costly family event for teenage girls in Latin America when they turn 15) to build houses for the needy. A grandparent couple had been saving up money to take all of their grandchildren to Disney World. When the 40 Day campaign happened, the grandchildren came to the grandparents and asked them to donate all the Disney World vacation monies to help build houses for the needy. One of the 8 year old grandsons said, "Grandpa, if God wants us to go to Disney World someday, He will provide another way. But these families need our help now." A Christian businessman challenged all of his employees to donate and help build houses for the needy. He told them he would double whatever funds they gave. The employees pooled their resources and raised \$15,000US and he matched it with another \$15,000 – and together their company helped build 20 houses.

When the 40 days were over, we didn't receive a \$20,000 offering or a \$40,000 or \$60,000 offering. When all the offering monies were counted at our church, we received \$469,000US – enough to build 313 houses! This was the greatest offering our church ever received in one weekend. We praise the LORD for what He did in us and through us during these 40 Days.



The next year, the LORD again put in my heart the idea we should do another campaign to help the needy. At first I had my doubts if this was a good idea. I was afraid that maybe people were getting tired of giving. But one morning, I received an email from a lady in the congregation, that new nothing about the idea God has put into my heart. Here is what she wrote me, "Good morning, Pastor Rony. God bless you and your ministry. I want to give you a message from the LORD: He told me about a health campaign that is in your heart. He says, is not from you, He has placed in you heart. Don't worry, because He has it all planned."

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This was remarkable because at that time this was not something that many people knew about. God used this woman's email to confirm for me that this was all God's idea. As we moved forward, we decided we wanted to bless people living in extreme poverty with 4 basic items they needed for their health and well-being:

- Water Filter: Contaminated water is the cause of chronic malnutrition in Guatemala 52% of the population suffers from this condition.
- Ecological Stove: Many mothers get sick and even die from lung diseases because they cook using open-fires.
- Solar Panel with 4 lights: In Guatemala, many houses do not have electricity.
- An ecological latrine: To avoid contamination.



This time we did the campaign only at my local church. But again we had so much fun doing this together. As a result the LORD allowed us to help 1,000 families with a kit called "Home Health". At this time we are sending teams of volunteers to bless many families with these Home Health kits.

It's fun to be generous. In this short article I cannot tell about all the miracles we saw on the process. What I can do is invite you to have fun in the "Generosity roller coaster", in which we obey God and see Him supernaturally provides. My challenge to you is hear from God, take a risk at being generous, and see how He guides and provides. If you want to help poor people in Guatemala, visit iniciativa58.org where there are listed about 60 organizations working to hasten the end of poverty in our country.

To bring a 40 Day Generosity campaign to your church, community, or country with the help of Brian Kluth, author of the 40 Day www.GenerousLife.org Devotional, visit www.LovingOurCommunity.org, email bk@kluth.org, or call 719.930.4000.